

LIMERICK SOCIALIST

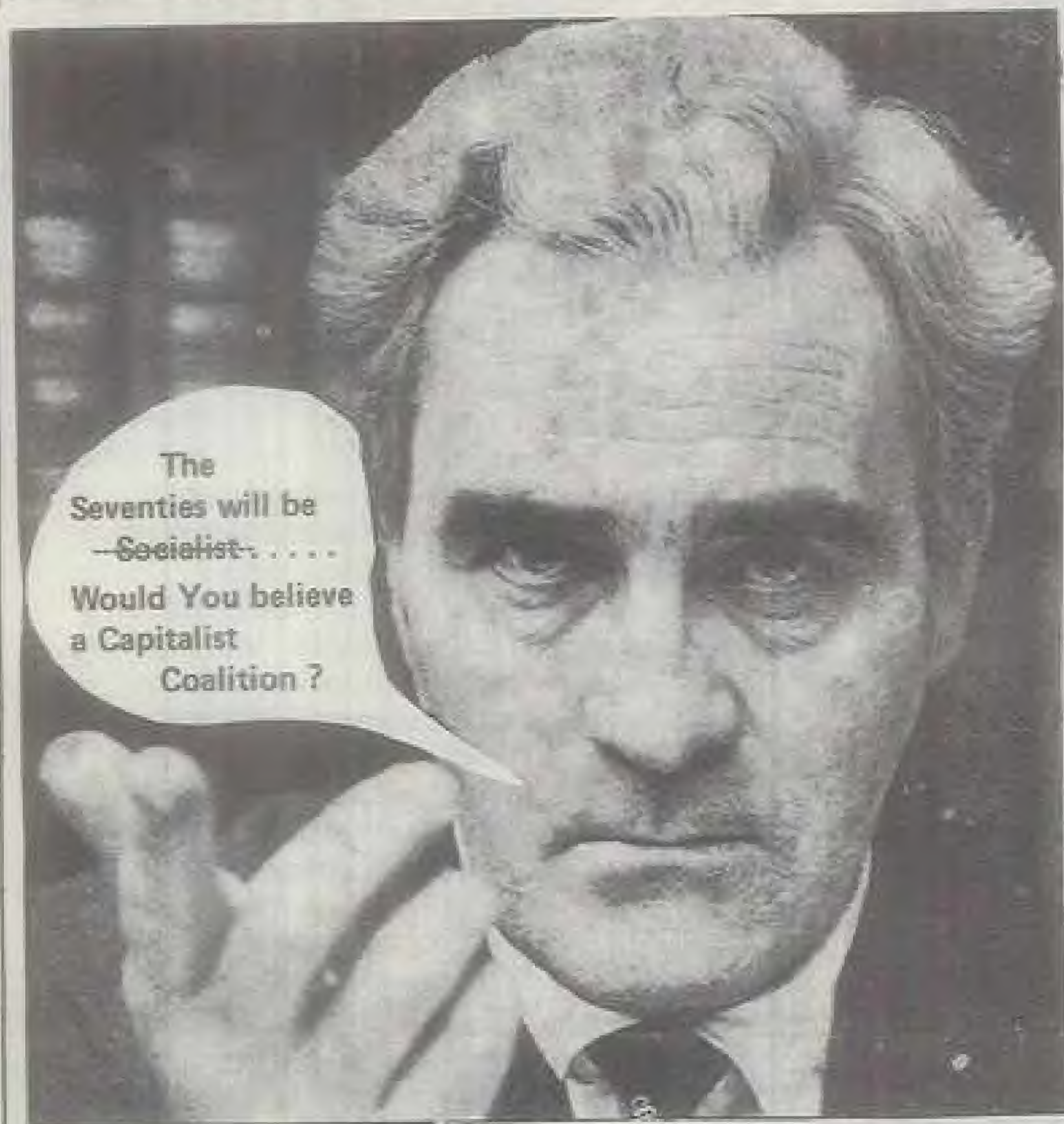
THE
VOICE
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WORKER

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o "That which is good for the working class I esteem patriotic . . ." James Connolly



The
Seventies will be
-Socialist-
Would You believe
a Capitalist
Coalition ?

"Lay Aside your Socialism and
Follow Me"

"A REAL ALTERNATIVE?"



"MINISTER-IN-WAITING"

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BIRDS OF A FEATHER



"AH! A SMALL DOSE OF DEMOCRACY
EVERY FOUR YEARS IS A GREAT
THING NOW FOR THE SPOILS!"

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Deserted

BY JOHN BOYLE

PART 2

Wives

In the first part of this article an account of a 'Late Late Show' discussion of the above mentioned topic was given, together with some criticisms of that programme's approach to the question, and the Twenty Six Counties State's general neglect of the entire problem.

To understand just why the problem of deserted wives assumes a particularly exaggerated form of the Irish context it is necessary to place the matter firmly in its special context. The demographic picture of the Irish population reflects immediately the high incidence of dependents per wage earner. The dependents are largely belonging to the very old and the very young age groups. The extended family of the pre-capitalist era is practically broken-up, but in so doing has given rise to an unbalanced population structure.

The legal apparatus of the land still reflects the patriarchal society so much a feature of the vanishing rural scene, yet firmly embedded in the Irish consciousness for some time to come if one is to judge from the frequency with which the father-son relationship crops up in contemporary Irish fiction (e.g. in the works of such as McGahern and Friel, for instance). That style of life is being replaced, but the forms which mirrored its strength are slower to adapt to change.

In the absence of any vigorous social democratic tradition the lingering death of the patriarchal society with its attendant customs, morals and taboos—all serving to stress the predominance of the male role and the subservience of the female—will be a protracted affair. This in itself raises pertinent questions of tactics for a Marxist movement—basically centring round the attitude to be adopted with regard to bourgeois democratic demands which will serve to reform the nature of the Southern Irish State to bring it into line with modern advanced capitalist requirements. Legal reforms will bulk large in such demands, for instance in the matter under discussion, and if the Workers' Association has quite correctly

adopted the democratic stance vis-a-vis the national question, it must be prepared to accept that a similar attitude of guarded support will be *expected* of it by those seeking to gain long-overdue reforms in the social legislation of a theocratic state.

The problem of course is to decide whether such a stance is worth taking up (i.e. whether there is anything to be gained from it). In an attempt to answer the problem, it might help to look briefly at the composition of the groups who comprise the liberal wing of our so-called democracy. One firstly has to exclude all the various Republican fronts of one shade or another (including the recently formed alliance known as the Irish Civil Rights Association—which is simply an attempt to perpetuate the tactics that have proved so successful in the North in the patently less fertile soil of the Free State), ranging from the Gardiner Place Land League to the Civil Liberties Group.

This leaves us with a small number of groups, such as the Family Planning Group, Free Legal Aid Centres, The Dublin Flat Dwellers Association (which could be regarded as the Gardiner Place's revamped Dublin Housing Action Committee), and others of lesser importance (e.g. Language Freedom Movement). As is clear even from the above, democratic or liberal opinion is confined to specific and unrelated issues pushed by predominantly middle class pressure groups. That, however, is the nature of the thing and might not be regarded as of serious moment. What is rather more important is that the extra-parliamentary forces possess not an ounce of political power.

There is no organised political party capable of supporting a social democratic reform programme—a glance at the personnel and political complexion of the Irish Labour Party cannot but convince one of that.

This would leave Marxist, it seems, in the very weak position of having to push merely reformist demands from behind a socialist banner. The long term advantages of such a position are none too clear, and it is at any rate one both theoretically and practically difficult to sustain. However, that seems to be the way it is.

There are several reformist demands that have to be supported in the matter of the institution of marriage. Contraception will doubtless sooner or later aspire to a more formal position of recognition than it presently enjoys. Divorce, however, is the key demand in this area and upon its institutionalization would at a stroke serve to eliminate some of the anomalies attendant upon the legal status of a deserted wife.

It is not suggested, however, as some of the Women's Liberation supporters here might do,

that formal alterations in the legislation of the Free State will in any way serve to alleviate the causes which give rise to the problem. It was not without significance that in two of the cases examined in detail on the 'Late Late Show' alcohol figured as an aggravating factor of considerable importance. In a country with the highest incidence of alcoholism in the world, it might be argued that the public house in the Irish context is equivalent to the 'other woman' in other countries insofar as it proves a wrecker of marriages.

LOVE AND MARRIAGE

"Bourgeois marriage of our own time is of two kinds. In Catholic countries the parents, as heretofore, still provide a suitable wife for their bourgeois son . . . The Catholic Church doubtless abolished divorce only because it was convinced that for adultery, as for death, there is no cure whatsoever. In Protestant countries, on the other hand, it is the rule that the bourgeois son is allowed to seek a wife for himself from his own class, more or less freely. Consequently, marriage can be based on a certain degree of love which, for decency's sake, is always assumed, in accordance with Protestant hypocrisy . . . Since in every kind of marriage, however, people remain what they were before they married, and since the bourgeois of Protestant countries are mostly philistines, this Protestant monogamy leads merely, if we take the average of the best cases, to a wedded life of leaden boredom, which is described as domestic bliss . . . Which of the two is in the worst plight is not always easy to make out . . ."

"In both cases, however, marriage is determined by the class position of the participants, and to that extent always remains marriage of convenience. In both cases, this marriage of convenience often enough turns into the crassest prostitution—sometimes on both sides, but much more generally on the part of the wife, who differs from the ordinary courtesan only in that she does not hire out her body, like a wage-earner, on piecework, but sells it into slavery once for all . . . Sex love in the relation of husband and wife is and can become the rule only among the oppressed classes, that is, at the present day, among the proletariat, no matter whether this relationship is officially sanctioned or not. But here all the foundations of classical monogamy are removed. Here, there is a complete absence of all property, for the safeguarding and inheritance of which monogamy and male domination were established. Therefore, there is no stimulus whatever here to assert male domination."

(Engels, *The Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State*)

If this points up anything, it is that men are often driven by the pressures of marriage into finding means of escape. This aspect of the problem, however, seems to gain little attention in the propaganda of some Women's Liberation publications. The responsibility of financing the marriage institution is, given the inadequate (i.e. non-existent) nursery and other facilities provided (i.e. not provided) by the state, in

continued on facing page

" . . . we see already that the emancipation of women and their equality with men are impossible and must remain so as long as women are excluded from socially productive work and restricted to housework, which is private. The emancipation of women becomes possible only when women are enabled to take part in production on a large, social scale, and when domestic duties require their attention only to a minor degree. And this has become possible only as a result of modern large-scale industry, which not only permits of the participation of women in production in large numbers, but actually calls for it and, moreover, strives to convert private domestic work also into a public industry."

(Engels, *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*).

Limerick Lore

ART FOR HER SAKE

On a fat end, reclining
Fur coated,
Culture Vulture,
Vulgar.
Smiles expensively.
Lips niceities
At intervals—
False teeth flashing.
Resumes returned
Attention, despite
Bewildered ignorance.
To night this is where
One should be seen
Hee—Haw tomorrow
But long live culture,
Though it's such a boring night.

CLAIM TO FAME

Limerick
Was famous
For Lace.
And all
For it's fine ham
Said Grace.
You'll agree
That's refined
But from facts
One's inclined
To say
Of toleration
It's shown
Little trace

ANOMALY

Dessie
Is a "subversive" member !
Now according to his law
Last December
This published "fact"
Gives us grounds to act
And despite his denial
We could drag him
To trial
For breaking
His own law—
Remember ?

Offences against the State (Amendment) Bill
1972 Section 3 (1b) ".....
omission by the accused to deny published
reports that he was a member of an unlawful
organisation but the fact of such denial shall
not by itself be conclusive....."

JACKED !

Skipper Jack in a ship called the "Dail"
Plotted a course towards the "New" Inis Fail
But a slight steering fault
Brought his voyage to a halt
And scuttled "Idle" Jack, shipmates and all.

Father and son

The timing of the final rally of the Labour Party to coincide with the return of Confraternity members from their weekly meeting was a master stroke. Despite the late start, the added influx swelled the attendance to a presentable size.

Frank Prendergast, president of the Limerick Council of Trade Unions, was brought along to give the platform party some sort of credible working class image. However, many local people were puzzled by the appearance on the stand of

a real alternative?

by jim kemmy

The defeat of Fianna Fail in the general election of February 28th poses a number of questions. Despite all his "Sweepstake" promises and his efforts to maintain "stability", Jack Lynch's failure to secure re-election underlines the crisis facing the political representatives of Irish Capitalism. The victory of the "national" coalition will do nothing to head off this crisis.

The election was held just before two important events concerning Northern Ireland are due to take place. The forthcoming British Government White Paper and the Border Plebiscite have vital implications for whatever Southern Irish Government is in office.

Despite all the ballyhoo about the "Irish Dimension", opinion is already hardening among the more honest and realistic of Southern politicians that the White Paper will in fact contain no sell-out of the Northern Protestant Community. The Border Plebiscite is also certain to show that the vast majority of the Northern Irish people are still in favour of union with Britain.

The results of these two issues will bring pressure to bear on the Southern Ireland Government to come to terms with the reality of the Northern situation. It is also probable that in the new proposed Council of Ireland set-up, the Northern Protestants will demand the deletion of Articles 2 and 3 of the Southern constitution (which claim jurisdiction over the North).

On social issues it is likely that there will be little difference between the performance of the Coalition Government and its Fianna Fail predecessor. Dealing with this question in its editorial of February 16th, the magazine Hibernia stated:

"There are social objectives outlined in the Coalition statement of intent, about which the Fine Gael/Labour combination would like to suggest that this election is all about. These include "the elimination of poverty, stopping the price rise and the declaration of a housing emergency." But why should one take this declaration seriously? Such objectives in the Irish context imply a significant shift in taxation leading to a meaningful redistribution of wealth. The Coalition manifesto pointedly shied away from dealing with this fundamental consideration, and until their colours are nailed to the mast, the Irish electorate will treat such pre-election promises with the cynicism they deserve.

an old grey-haired man. Roddy Connolly, son of one of the party's founder-members, had come to town to preach a message.

Connolly made great play on the fact that he and Labour candidate Coughlan were Blackrock College old boys. The ideas of his father, James Connolly, on politics and the role of the working class went unstated. But the audience were left in no doubt that tail-ending the Fine

While it is possible that the three parties may have hoped that the Northern problem would go away, Healy may have been near the mark with his second comment. At a time when the political representatives of Capitalism were in trouble, the professional representatives of the Labour Party came to the rescue to prop up the system for a little while longer. Perhaps it was this achievement that Brendan Halligan, General Secretary of the Labour Party, had in mind when on February 27th he wrote the following to all Labour candidates and directors of elections:

"... I would like to thank you for your help and co-operation during the campaign. It has been an exemplary one under the most trying and difficult circumstances. I am happy in the way in which the Labour Party has worked during the campaign and whatever the result I am satisfied that we did our very best together."

In the East Limerick context, the "no-change" result was generally expected. In topping the poll O'Malley secured most of the middle class Fianna Fail vote in the city. The fact that he was the only Fianna Fail candidate in the city was, of course, a big help. O'Donnell held on to his strong farmers' vote in finishing second.

Labour, in dropping over one thousand votes, followed the Dublin pattern. Despite the prediction of his camp followers, Coughlan was lucky to limp into the fourth seat. It seems as if Coughlan's combination of bluff and bigotry is no longer sufficient to bolster up his crumbling position.

From the electorate's point of view, there is in fact, only one question at stake in this General Election, and that is whether the political power and patronage should be switched at this stage to another administration; to another collection of rather similar Irish men and women who exemplify rather similar attitudes, prejudices and objectives."

Another pro-coalition pundit, the cynical "Backbencher" Healy, writing in the Irish Times on March 1st stated:

Two things died in this election. One was the word "partition". Look in all the scripts, on all the posters, at all the commercials. The word isn't there. Remember that, when you think of the Fianna Fail campaign. The second thing to die was the charge that Fine Gael and Labour were amateurs.

Gael capitalists had become more important than socialist principles.

When James Connolly came to Limerick sixty years ago to speak about socialism, he stood alone. The action of his son in 1973 in speaking in support of the anti-socialist and anti-Semitic Coughlan is an insult to his father's ideals. It is also a shabby and sad end to Roddy Connolly's political career.

PLUGGING ON...

Social problems continue to increase... unemployment is still a major factor... dire hardship, injustice and deprivation are an accepted part of Irish society.

These are some points made in the annual report of the Limerick Social Service Council, which in terms of comment on society, must rate as the most "outspoken" so far produced.

Yet for all its exposition of human suffering the report fails to take a positive position in relation to the capitalist system. Instead it

settles for the easy way out by calling for a realistic national minimum income.

This of course will never be granted, as it suits the present system to keep people poor... living in second-class housing and ignorant of any coherent political philosophy, so that the elite minority can make vast profits at the expense of the deprived majority.

"Their plight contrasts sadly with the standards of living regarded as tolerable by society to-day and the contrast is alarming when there is ostentatious and wasteful display of wealth by those to whom the advantages of prosperity accrue."

So, what is the Social Service Centre doing about it?

"There are many gaps in our national social services due to inadequate financial provision. The voluntary services which try to plug these gaps have also got problems with finance," states the report.

So it is clear that the functions of the Centre is to "plug the gaps" rather than to tackle the social problems at their source. It is true, that in the short term, the Centre relieves distress, but it is a distress which will always exist under the present system, and indeed grow greater in coming years.

The top ten problems dealt with last year were: material and financial aid, marital problems, difficulties of the aged, unmarried mothers, and youth problems.

The report states that those who expect automated solutions to social problems do not understand people.

As automation is a tool of the present system, it can only be assumed that social problems will increase... but the Social Service Centre has no answer.

The report also states that the sight of suffering makes them feel uncomfortable and often they cope by ignoring it. There is a long history of "ignoring" suffering in Ireland, and judging from the report, it is obvious that much more ignoring will go on in the future.

The position of the Centre is clear. It sees that the many social problems can only be eliminated under a just and equal division of national wealth. Yet the Centre cannot openly say this... because its survival depends on those who support and play important parts in upholding the present system of human exploitation. Its role is to act as a stop-gap for capitalism in Limerick, by plugging some of the worst gaps.

THE MONTH'S MIND

Limerick was buzzing with excitement this week after the shock announcement of Dessie O'Malley that he intended to abolish all crime as from 1st April 1974. So far it is not known if the abolition will apply only to Limerick and then be gradually introduced to the country at large.

It is understood that a lot depends on the success of the Limerick venture and at his Corbally home last night the Minister re-affirmed his decision. "From reports given to me by Garda officers I have no hesitation in saying that I believe Limerick will rise to this opportunity. Indications were that crime was dying out and I certainly don't want to impose any additional hardship on the already hardpressed electorate, who are being promised all kinds of everything by the Fine Gael and Labour parties," said Mr. O'Malley.

However, at a public meeting held in Hanratty's Hotel, the Minister, behind four-foot of bullet-proof plate glass, was heckled by a group of students. "All the way with Fools Day," they shouted as Special Branch men tip-toed around cooing: "All you need is Love".

Later, Fianna Fail Headquarters in Dublin denied the episode and blamed it all on the "Limerick Leader", "which everyone knows was a Blue-Shirt paper and would accept paid advertisements from the Devil."

THE WATCHWORD OF CAPITALISM

Ald. Mick Lipper said at the Labour Party's final rally that he had no intention of going on strike until he got his rights. When his statement was greeted by some heckling, Ald. S. Coughlan roared: "Get the disrupters... Confraternity men to the fight."

Dr. John O'Connell, a non-practising socialist, promised to have Stevie made Minister for Defence in the New National Coalition Government, and this was met with wild applause from the collection of beer-sharks rolling around at the foot of the platform. "A pub-crawl in a Mercedes... 'tis one thing I always wanted..." said one as he held on to a "No Parking" sign for moral support.

The meeting ended on a most appropriate musical note with the singing of 'We're on the one Road' and a brand new anthem composed jointly by Brendan Halligan and Garrett Fitzgerald titled: 'The Watchword of Capitalism'.

IN BLUESHIRT BATTLE

There was uproar at the Fine Gael final rally of the election in Cruises Hotel when Ald. Pat Kennedy was punched by a grey-haired woman as he spoke of the plight of the less well off sections of the community.

"Take that, you dirty thing," said the frail old woman, "you should be ashamed of yourself... mentioning the poor here... keep out the cottier."

Order was soon restored by Gus O'Driscoll promising everyone drink in the Corbally Bar. "I hope ye' don't believe me," he quipped and was immediately set upon by a group of refined thugs who kicked him down the stairs. "All this promising is gone to their heads," he mumbled, "they can't even take a joke now".

The peace was later disturbed by someone referring to Tom O'Donnell as a "Guttural-voiced Cheshire Cat," but Ald. Kennedy denied that he had uttered the offending words. "Cop yourself on", said O'Donnell. "You're only wasting your time and money." However, in the best interests of the Party, the Fine Gaelers placed the national first and the power-hungry coalition, O'Donnell, Russell and Kennedy were let loose on the hapless people.

ALL RIGHT JACK

Reports that Gerry Collins in the last few days of the election campaign changed his election slogan to Somebody Up There Doesn't Like Me, remained unconfirmed in Abbeyfeale last night. It is known however, that following the clash of his premature press advertisement with Jack Lynch's "no rates" announcement, a shocked Gerry sent the following telegram to Lynch; "I'M not All Right Jack, F.F. to you".

ONE GOOD TURN...

In his desperate bid for re-election to the Dail, Labour Candidate S. Coughlan sent thousands of "reminder" circulars to all those constituents favoured by his many turns. Among his free postal delivery was a "personal letter" to Mayor Paddy Kiely, long-time Fianna Fail Director of Elections. The letter stated:

Paddy,

Don't forget me. After all I made you Mayor of Limerick... and one good turn surely deserves another.

Your Fond Friend,
Stephen.

ALL TOLD

"Finally, towards the end of 1969, one of the Northern delegations emerged from a personal meeting with Mr. Lynch looking very happy. They indicated that they had got a firm promise from the Taoiseach that he would supply them with guns."

(Neil Blaney, "Sunday Independent", 4/3/73).

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